

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 534**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Swanson**

February 16, 2011

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An act to amend Section 51.7 of the Civil Code, relating to civil rights.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 534, as introduced, Swanson. Civil rights: homeless persons.

Existing law sets forth various personal rights and provides that all persons within California have the right to be free from violence, or intimidation by the threat of violence, because of, among other characteristics, their race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, political affiliation, or sex. Existing law further permits an individual whose exercise or enjoyment of specified personal rights has been interfered with to bring a civil action for damages, including actual damages, exemplary damages, attorney's fees, injunctive relief, and other appropriate relief. Existing law requires the Department of Fair Employment and Housing to receive, investigate, and conciliate complaints that an individual's personal rights have been violated.

This bill would specify that homeless persons, as defined, are entitled to the rights set forth under existing law, and would provide that a homeless person has the right to be free from violence or intimidation by threat of violence directed against that person on the basis of that person's status as a homeless person. The bill would also provide that these provisions shall not be construed to enlarge or diminish an existing duty, if any, by an owner of residential rental or commercial property to protect a homeless person who is present on the property from violence or intimidation by threats of violence.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. Section 51.7 of the Civil Code is amended to  
2 read:

3 51.7. (a) All persons within the jurisdiction of this state have  
4 the right to be free from any violence, or intimidation by threat of  
5 violence, committed against their persons or property because of  
6 political affiliation, or on account of any characteristic listed or  
7 defined in subdivision (b) or (e) of Section 51, or position in a  
8 labor dispute, or because another person perceives them to have  
9 one or more of those characteristics. The identification in this  
10 subdivision of particular bases of discrimination is illustrative  
11 rather than restrictive.

12 *(b) (1) This section includes any violence, or intimidation by*  
13 *threat of violence, committed against the person or property of a*  
14 *homeless person because the person is, or is perceived to be, a*  
15 *homeless person.*

16 *(2) For purposes of this section, “homeless person” means:*

17 *(A) A person who does not have a full-time residence.*

18 *(B) A person that has a residence that constitutes either of the*  
19 *following:*

20 *(i) A shelter designated to provide temporary living*  
21 *accommodations to those in need.*

22 *(ii) A building or area that is not ordinarily designed for, or*  
23 *ordinarily used for, living accommodations for persons.*

24 *(3) This subdivision shall not be construed to enlarge or*  
25 *diminish an existing legal duty, if any, by an owner of residential*  
26 *rental or commercial property to protect a homeless person from*  
27 *violence, or intimidation by threats of violence, because the*  
28 *homeless person is physically present on the owner’s property or*  
29 *other property controlled by the owner incidental to ownership of*  
30 *the rental property.*

31 ~~(b)~~

- 1     (*c*) This section does not apply to statements concerning
- 2     positions in a labor dispute which are made during otherwise lawful
- 3     labor picketing.

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